Non-availability of cargo facility in Kashmir

3685. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cargo facilities are not available in Kashmir after the closure of Srinagar Airport; and

(b) if so, action proposed to meet the demand of the local people who have protested on this account?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Sirnagar airport which belongs to Indian Air Force (IAF) has been temporarily closed for flight operations from 8.6.1998 for recarpeting of the runway. Civil flights are being operated from Awantipore Air Force Station. Airports Authority of India and IAF have provided all necessary facilities both for passenger and cargo handling at Awantipore Air Force Station.

Procurement of small aircraft

3686. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is approving the purchase of 22 new small aircraft to cater to urban and semi-urban areas in the country;

(b) if so, what are the new cities likely to be covered by the air network and what is the time-schedule for their acquisition and deloyment; and

(c) whether action has been initiated to simultaneously prepare the infrastructure so that operational problems do not crop up later on?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) On 25th June, 1998 import permission for 13 new smaller aircraft and 5 new helicopters has been approved.

(b) The airlines are free to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability subject to compliance with the route dispersal guidelines. The operators are required to import/acquire the aircraft within a period of one year from the date of issue of permission with one time extension for three months by the competent authority on genuine grounds. However, when the aircraft proposed to be imported is a new one with a definite delivery schedule, extension is allowed for the actual lead time of delivery.

(c) Preparation/upgradation of infrastructure is an on-going process.

Code Sharing between AI and IA

3687. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India is facing difficult situation because of shrinking fleet and in absence of code sharing and route rationalisation with sister airline, Indian Airlines; and

(b) what steps are being taken to ensure better coordination between these two Airlines and bring Air India in profit earning position?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Air India has a small and aging fleet. Its code-share services with Indian Airlines have, however, commenced from November, 1997 in a phased manner. A Sub-Committee of the Common Board of Air India/Indian Airlines has also been set up to give its recommendations on route rationalization between the two national carriers.

Poor flight information service by Indian Airlines

3688. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that accurate and advance information of arrivals and